

LOCATION OF RAMAYAN LANKA

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1. The location of Ramayan Lanka has been a challenge for scholars, historians and others. Though many scholars made efforts in the past to locate it, they could not do it unanimously, because of varied available materials and diversified views developed out of them. At present there are two groups, one restricts the journey of Rama within the boundaries of Vindhya Mountain and Godhavari river¹ and locates Lanka from Amarakantaka near the source of Narmadha to the mouth of Godhavari² and the other group on equator³ from Sumatra to Maldives. Of course, the popular view that the present day Sri Lanka / Ceylon has been the Ravana's Lanka has been prevalent and continuing. Analyzing the facts and existing theories, it is evident that the location of Lanka directly depends on the location of important places, mountains and rivers mentioned in Ramayana, particularly Chitrakoota, Vidhya mountain, Agasthya Ashram, Dandakaranya, Panchavati, Janasthana, Kishkinda, Malay mountain, Mahendra mountain, Pandya Kingdom with the rivers Kaveri and Tamraparni and Lanka itself. Therefore, the existing hypotheses and theories are again critically analyzed with the updated materials.

2. Sirdar M. V. Kibe, read a paper on the subject at the first session of the Oriental Conference held at Poona in 1919 "Ravana's Lanka Discovered." Madras in 1925. He tried to locate it on a hill top – Amarakanthak, 10 miles from the Pendra road station of the Bilaspur – Katni branch of the Bengal – Nagpur Railway, Choli village (Lat.22°15'; Long. 75°40'). This could have provoked M. S. Purnalingam Pillai to come out his book locating Ravana's Lanka in Ceylon itself⁴. The existing theories about the location of Lanka are as follows⁵:

Sl. No	Author	Title of the work	Location
1	C. V. Vaidya	The Riddle of the Ramayana ⁶	Ceylon (present Sri Lanka).
2	S. B. Dikshit	Bharatvarsiya Bhuvarnana (Marathi)	-do-

¹ J. C. Ghosh, M.V. Kibe, T. Paramshiv Iyer, Hiralal, H. D. Sankalia and others.

² M. V. Kibe has been the fore-runner of this hypothesis. ***Ramayana and Lanka***, Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Vol.22, No.1/2, 1941, pp.123-127.

Kibe, M. V. ***Further Light on Ravana's Lankā located in Central India from Vālmiki's Rāmāyana***, Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 17.4 (1935): pp. 371-384.

³ All scholars of this group mainly depend upon the astronomical reference to Lanka.

⁴ M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, ***Ravana the Great: King of Lanka***, The Bibliotheca, Tinnevely, 1928.

⁵ As on 1987, the author has given the references about the subject matter dealt with by other scholars, experts and researchers.

⁶ C. V. Vaidya, ***The Riddle of the Ramayana***, Melarachand Lachhmandas, New Delhi, 1906.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

3	M. S. Aney	Ramayana Tradition in Ceylon	-do-
4	T. Paramshiv Iyer ⁷	Ramayana and Lanka	Lingga Archipelago, Linga island on Equator.
5	N. S. Adhikari ⁸	Lanka of Ravana	Sumatra in Indonesia.
6	V. H. Vader	Situation of Ravana's Lanka on Equator	Maldiv islands.
7	C. N. Mehta	Sundrakandam or the Flight of Hanuman to Lanka via Sunda Islands by Air Route	Somewhere in Australia.
8	H. Jacobi	Des Ramayana (English translation)	Assam
9	Vishnupant Karandikar	Quoted by Kibe	Near Mahesvara on the Narmadha.
10	M. V. Kibe	Ravana's Lanka Discovered	Amarakantaka, peak of the Vidhya Range.
11	Jogesh Chandra Ghosh	A Note on Ravana's Lanka in Central India	Amarakantaka, a peak of the Vindhya Range.
12	F. E. Pargiter	The Geography of Rama's exile	Ceylon (present Sri Lanka)
13	Dhani Nivat	The Rama Jataka	Lanklasak in Malay Peninsula.
14	Sachchidanand Sahai	The Khay Thuraphi	Outside the territory of Jambudvipa.
15	G. S. Sampath Iyengar	Kishkinda to Lanka	A city on the submerged land on equator.
16	D. P. Mishra ⁹	The Search for Lanka	At the mouth of Godhavari – a submerged island.

Besides these theories, there are casual references about the location of Lanka by various authors. The Lava Ramayana places Lanka in Laos, precisely in Makong valley¹⁰. The Pag Sam Jon Zan places both Sabhala (a village in Central India) and Lankapuri in the country of Uddiyana, consisting 500,000 towns¹¹. Forbes places it in Lakadives¹². Before going into the details of the existing theories, let

⁷ T. Paramshiv Iyer, *Ramayana and Lanka*, The Bangalore Press, Bangalore, 1940, pp.12-16.

⁸ N. S. Adhikari, *Lanka of Ravana*, Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, Vol.25, pp.498-503.

⁹ D. P. Mishra, *The Search for Lanka*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, 1985.

¹⁰ V. Raghavan (Ed.), *Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, 1980, p.265.

¹¹ Waddle, *Lamaism*, p.182; Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. III, p.745.

¹² C. M. Enrique, *Ceylon Past and Present*, p.19.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad
from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

us see what has been given in Valmiki Ramayana about the sojourn of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. So to understand, the Valmiki Ramayana verses are analyzed critically as follows:

3. The narrative is given based on the Ayodhyakanda (Book II). Rama leaves Ayodhya along with Lakshmana and Sita in a Chariot driven by Sumanta (II.40.17), and goes out of the city (II.40.33) and reaches the banks of Tamasa river (II.45.33). Crosses of Tamasa river (II.46.28) and reaches a smooth road (II.46.29). Crosses the river Vedhasruti (II.49.10), river Gomti (II.49.11) and Saandika (II.49.12). Crossing the territories of Kosala (II.50.8 to 10) reaches the banks of Ganges in the vicinity of Srīngaverapura the modern Singraur (II.50.26). Bids farewell to Sumantra (II.52.80) and reaches the other bank of Ganges by boat (II.52.100). Reaches the place where Yamuna meets Ganga (II.54.2) in the day and reaches Bharadwaja ashram in the evening (II.54.9). Bharadwaja tells the location of Chitrakoot (II.54.28). Crosses the Yamuna by a raft prepared by themselves (II.55.14) and reaches Chitrakoot hill (II.56.12). Enters Valmiki ashrama (II.56.16), builds a Parnasala (34) and stays there (35). Afraid of prolonging his stay, he leaves Chitrakoot (II.117.4) and reaches Atri's hermitage (II.117.5). He enters the Dandaka forest (II.119.22).

4. The sages receive Rama (Aranyakanda – Book – III, verse 1). Rama kills Viradha (4). He visits the hermitage of Sarabhanga (5.3). Then crosses rivers of deep waters and sees a bright mountain (7.2). Enters the forest and reaches the hermitage of Sutiksana (7.4). Leaving that place, he goes on seeing several mountain peaks, forests and charming rivers (10.2). Thus covering a long distance arrives at Panchapsara lake (10.32 to 36). Rama asks about the location of the hermitage of Agastya (11.32 to 36). He is informed that southward to a distance of four yojanas from that place, is the hermitage of Agastya's brother (11.37-38). From there the Agastya ashram is at a distance of one yojana (11.41). Accordingly, Rama first visits the Ashram of the Agastya's brother and then reaches Agastya's ashram (11.53, 54, 81 & 84). Agastya says that Panchavati is two yojanas from there and advises him to go there (12.13). On his way to Panchavati, he meets Jatayu (14.1). Reaching Panchavati, Rama says that they would stay there with Jatayu (15.1 & 19). Lakshmana builds a parnasala for Rama (15.20). Up to this, propounders of all theories agree with each other, identifying places, rivers and mountains with the present ones, whether the distances are calculated in yojanas, krosas or miles. After this only, they differ in identification of other important places. Therefore, let us analyse the verses carefully which have bearing on the sojourn of Rama.

5. While spending time at Panchavati near Godhavari river, Surpanaka, Ravana's sister comes there (17.2). Seeing handsome Rama, she introduces herself, as sister of Ravana who is the valiant son of Visrava and the other brothers are Kumbakarna, Vibhisana, Khara and Dusana. Then she expresses her desire to have him as her husband (17.20-26). As she is not satisfied with the words of Rama, she rushes towards Sita with anger. Lakshmana lops her nose and ears (18). In retaliation, she sends her brothers with army. Rama kills Dusana (26),

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad
from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

Tirisira (27) and Khara (30) at Janasthana. All sages, including Agastya, praise Rama (30.33-36). Akampana, the only Rakshasa escaping from Janasthana, informs Ravana about the incident. Instigated by Surpanaka, Ravana decides to abduct Sita with the help of Maricha. Accordingly, both Ravana and Maricha, beholding as before on the way towns and forests, mountains and all the cities reach the Danadakaranya (42.9 to 11). By trick, Maricha makes Rama to come away from the hermitage and then Lakshmana to follow. Meanwhile Ravana enters the hermitage. He is invited by Sita, but refuses him when he comes out with his desire. So Ravana starts boasting himself, telling the he is half-brother of Kubera and he only made him to leave Lanka and occupied (48: 3-4). Also, he says that beyond the sea stands his beautiful Capital Lanka (48-10). But as Sita twits him sharply, he gets angry and takes her away. On the way Sita cries to trees and mountains to inform that she is carried away by Ravana. Seeing Jatayu, she requests the same (49: 36-40). Jatayu tries to drive Ravana from his evil design, but Ravana wounds him critically in the encounter. Ravana continues his journey. Not finding any saviour while being carried away by Ravana, Sita sees five vanaras sitting on a mountain peak (54-1)¹³. She throws her jewels in the midst of them (54-2). Having passed beyond the Pampa lake, Ravana proceeded with his face towards the city of Lanka (54-5). Crossing through the air like an arrow shot from a bow, he quickly left behind forests, rivers, mountains and lakes (54-7). Having reached the ocean, the abode of Timis¹⁴ (a species of fish of enormous size) and crocodiles and the resting place of rivers, Ravana for his part passed clearly beyond it (54-8). While Sita was being carried away, the ocean found its billows brought to a standstill and its fishes and large aquatic serpents rendered motionless due to fear (54-9). He reaches Lanka (54-12). Here, in Canto 54, Valmiki clearly describes that Ravana proceeded “with his face towards the city of Lanka” and avoided villages, cities and towns. Later Sampathi’s son says that he saw Ravana carrying a woman. Moreover, the description of aquatic species is also to be noted.

6. Meanwhile, when Rama returns to hermitage after killing Maricha, he sees Lakshmana. Both reach the hermitage and are pained not to see Sita. After lamenting and having a dialogue with Lakshman, Rama decides to search for Sita. Reaching Godhavari, Rama asks trees and animals about Sita. A deer springs on his feet all of sudden and turns his head towards south (64-18). Getting hint from it, Lakshmana submits to Rama, “In as much as, having sprung on their feet all at once and these deer pointed to move this “south-westerly” (prastito dakshina dhisham) direction, which is presided over by Rakshas headed by Niriiti (64-23). Accordingly, when they move towards south-westerly direction, they come across Jatayu fallen on the ground, drenched with blood (67-7-10). Jatayu informs that Sita has been carried away by Ravana (67-15).

¹³ That Sita threw jewels and they were collected by the monkeys and tried to wear them differently, had been recorded in the Tamil Sangam literature dated to c. 500 / 300 BCE to 100 CE.

¹⁴ Timis or Thunnies are very common fish of oceanic waters surrounding the islands between Madagascar and Sri Lanka. In Tamil, they are popularly known as “Masi meen.”

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad
from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

7. In the South-westerly direction (69-1), after covering a distance of two leagues beyond Janastrgana, they enter a dense forest called Krauncha (69: 5-6). Then having traveled two leagues in an easterly direction, leaving Krauncha behind, they see the hermitage of Matanga (69: 8-13). Lakshmana punishes Ayomukhi (69-18). Then both reach an impregnable forest (69-19), where Rama cuts off the right arm of and Lakshman left arm of Kabanda (70-9). Kabanda informs, going westward, they can reach Rshyamuka (72-12). Crossing a forest and woodland, they can reach Pampa (73: 3-11). To the west of Pampa stands the munificent Rsyamuka Mountain (73-29). He also advises him to make friendship with Sugriva (73-450). Accordingly, they first met Sabari and then Sugriva.

8. Kishkindakandam (Book IV) gives the following details. Springing to the mount Malaya, Hanu,man introduces Rama and Lakshmana to Sugriva (5-1). Along with Sugriva, Rama leaves for Kishkinda (13: 10-2). On the way is the hermitage of Saptajna (13-1). After killing Vali, Rams stays at the mountain Prasravana (27). As assured, Sugriva sends searching parties in all four directions giving instructions and asking them to return within a month. In eastern quarters, he asks them to explore in the following places: the rivers to be met in the direction are Bhagirathi (Ganges), Sarayu, Kausiki (Kosi), Yamuna having its source in the Kalindi mountain, Saraswati, Sindhu, Mahi, Kalmahi – the territories of Brahmamala, Vedeha, Malwa, Kasi, Kosala, Maghadha, Pundra, Anga (40: 16-24). Yavadwipa (the island of Java) (40-31)m, place of Siddhas, Sone river (40: 33-34), the most dreadful islands comprising Iksudwipa surrounded by Ikshamudra (40-35), Redsea, Salmali island, abode of Garuda (40: 38-39)., Mandeha mountains (40-41), Ksiroda ocean, Rsabha mountain, Sudarsana lake, huge marine fire (perhaps existing volcano) called Vadavamuka (40: 42-48)., at a distance of thirteen yojanas from the northern shore is a fresh water ocean (40-50), Jatarupsila mountain, beyond it lies a mountain of gold (40-54), Saumnasa peak (40-57), Susarsana island (40-61), and Eastern mountain (40-66).

9. Southern quarter: Vindhya Range (though situated to the north of Prasravana hill in the vicinity of Kishkinda from where the list of places in the south evidently references to Aryavarta, the region extending from the Arabian sea to the Bay of Bengal and bounded by the Vindhyan range in the north), Narmada river, Godhavari, Krishnaveni, Varada (Wardha), territories of Vidharbha, Rstika, Mahiska, Vanga, Kalinga (Utkala), Puasika, entire forest of Pandaka, Territories of Andhra, Pundra, Chola, Panduya and Kerala (41: 8-12)., Kaveri river, in front of Malaya mountain (41-13), Agstya Ashrama (a reference has already been made to a hermitage of Agstya located in the north of Panchavati. Even as sage Valmiki is believed to have a number of hermitages at different places it can be understood that besides the one located north of Panchavati he had another at the spot mentioned). Crossing the river Tamraparni, the wonderful gate of the city of the Pandya (perhaps modern Madurai), can be seen, then comes the sea (41: 14-19), Mahendra mountain, an island at a distance of 100 yojanas (41: 20-24), in that island shines a glorious hill Puspika, beyond that lies Suryavan mountain, Vaidyuta (41: 28-29), Kunjara mountain on which Agasthya dwells

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad
from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

(41: 34-35), on the mountain Kunjara stands a city of Bhagavati (41-37), beyond it Rhisaba mountain (41-44) and then comes Pitruloka.

10. Western quarters: Canto 42: Territory of Saurashtra, Chandtachitra (modern district of Madura), Bahlika (modern Baikh), Kusksi (comprised in MP), Arabian sea, town of Muravi (Morvi), Jataputra, a forest of Alaksita, Sindhu river and the sea (?), from sea at a distasnce of 100 yojanas is Pariyatra mountain – Vajra mountain (19-22), then come the mountains Chakravaka, Varaha on which Pragjyotisapura lies, Meru, Meru sarvani and western mountain.

11. Northern quarter: Canto 43: the islands of Mlechhas, Pulinda, Surasena, Prasthelas, Bharatas and Kuru (11), Kamboja, Yavanas, Sakas, Dardas (living beyond Peshawar) (12), hermitage of Soma, Gandharvas, Kala mountain (14), Sudarsana mountain (16), Devasakha (17), beyond that an area of 100 yojanas devoid of mountains, rivers and trees (desert), Kubera's abode, Krauncha mountain, Mainala mountain, hermitage of Vaikhanasas and Vailakhiyas, Sailoda, the island of Vitara kurus, northern sea and Somagiri mountain (19-58).

12. The repeated mention of Vindhya mountain in the southern direction by Valmiki is very much intriguing. But in Ramayana there are repeated mention of cities, towns, rivers and towns two times. Pundra is mentioned twice (IV-40-23) and (IV-41-12) in eastern and southern quarters. Sindhu is mentioned in the eastern quarter (IV-40-21) and the western quarter (IV-42-15). Godhavari is mentioned twice in some editions, as has been noted by M. V. Kibe. There are two countries named Koala one distinguished as northern and having its capital at Ayodhya and the other called southern comprising the modern Chattisgarh district. There are two rivers called Mandakini, one near Chitrakuta and the other south of the Godavari, both of which have already been mentioned, both are mentioned in the list of rivers in Mahabharat also (Bhisma parva, ix, lines 342-344). In the same list of rivers (lines 321 to 345) will be found two Sindhus (the Indus and the tributary of the river Jamuna), two Chandrabagas, two Kausikas, two Payoshinis, two Saraswatis, two Karishinis, two Bahudas and two Durgas. The Ramayana says Mount Gokarna is visible from the mount Gandhamadana and according to Ramaopakyana, Ravana, when going from Lanka to avenge Khara's death, "passed beyond Trikuta and Kalaparnvat and saw the deep monster-infested ocean and passing beyond that arrived at Gokarna, the tranquil abode beloved of Siva" (cclxxvi, lines 15, 998 to 16,000), with whose help, he carried off Sita. About the mentioning of names twice, F. E. Pargiter¹⁵ aptly remarked, "*considering these passages and all circumstances to which I have referred, it seems to me the Vindhya mountain mean here must be the hills and plateau of South Maisur. These stretch across from the western to Eastern Ghats and form a dividing ridge in the south, somewhat like the Vindhya range in the north. The waves of the sea are compared to the ridges of these mountains (Sund.k.xciii, 19), a simile very appropriate to a mountainous plateau*". D. R. Bhandarkar also takes similar view with reference to the Vindhya and the ocean

¹⁵ F.E. Pargiter, *The Geography of Rama's Exile*, JRAS, 1894, p.261

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

(IV-58-7; IV-60-4 & 7), as referring to the Vindhya near the extreme south of the Peninsula. In view of the above, the Vindhya Range mentioned in the north and the one mentioned in the south are two different mountains.

13. The search party which went in the southern quarter under Angatha and Hanuman followed the same route as instructed by Sugriva. After searching the Vindhya region thoroughly (IV-48-1 to 4; 49-17 to 19), entered Rksbala cave and lost their way. They were informed by Sampati that his son Suparswa saw Ravana carrying a youthful lady (IV-58 & 59). Encouraged by him, the party continued their search in the southern direction and reached the south sea (IV-63&64). Hanuman climbed up Mahendra mountain and reached Lanka in two leaps. He found Sita in Asokavana, returned and informed Sugriva and Rama, Then, rama decided to march towards Lanka with the army.

14. **Kishkinda to Lanka:** In the verses of Kishkindakanda, Valmiki describes the movement of Rama and his army from Kishkinda to Lanka. In Canto VI-3, interrogated about Lanka by Rama on his hearing the appeal of Sugriva, Hanuman gives a detailed description of Lanka as he saw it. Then, Rama fixes a propitious hour (VI-4-5) for the departure of his forces for Lanka and perceives good omens. Rama orders his army to march.

15. Rama whose mind was set on piety, thereupon, sallied forth with his army in a southerly direction (VI-4-23). The army proceeded precisely in a southerly direction (VI-4-26). Avoiding to the precincts of cities and as well as the rural parts like one seized with fear, knowing as it did the command of Rama, marched (VI-4-39) and proceeded towards southerly direction (VI-4-43). They proceeded along encompassing the southerly quarter along with the mountains, the woods and the sky (VI-4-57), while the army crossed the rivers on the way all their currents flowed in the opposite direction (VI-4-59). Here, the important point to be noticed is that the motion of the direction of the rivers. In southern India, rivers originate from the west, flow towards east and reach the Bay of Bengal. If one carefully watches the rivers at the place of origin, first, they flow in a north-eastern direction and then turn towards east. That is why Valmiki very clearly mentions that the currents flowed in the opposite direction (VI-4-57), when the army crossed the rivers.

16. As already mentioned as Rama avoided the precincts of cities and rural areas according to the principles of ancient Indian warfare, we find no description about any city or town but copious details about trees, mountains, flowers, animals etc. the trees mentioned are Tilaka, Asoka, Sndyvara, Tinia and Karavira (VI-4-72), Ankola, Karanja, Plakes, Nygrodha, Jambu, Myrobalan and Nipa trees (VI-4-73). Sandal wood trees (VI-4-75), Ketki tree, Vasanti and Madhavi creepers and Kunda (Jasmine) (VI-4-76 to 78), Chiiribilva, Vadhuka, Varjala, Bakula, Ranjaka trees (VI-4-79), Patala, Kovidara, Kunchilinda, Arjuna, Simapa, Kutaja, Hintala, Churna, blue Asoka, Sarala, Padmaka trees (VI-4-80&81). The birds and animals mentioned are Chakravaka (the ruddy geese), ducks, water fowls, cranes, boars, deer (VI-4-82 & 83), Aligators, Timis (a specie of gigantic fish – already

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

mentioned in III-54-8 about the description of south sea), Timingalas, sharks (VI-4-109 to 113). Boars, hyenas, tigers, elephants (VI-4-84). Flowers mentioned as Blue lotus, white water lilies (VI-4-85). Any Zoologist would say that the species mentioned are connected with hilly areas and ocean. Coming to Rama's march, the army reached the Sahya mountain (identified with a part of Western Ghats) thick with trees and rich in varied wood lands, the army climbed up to it (VI-4-70). After crossing Malay mountain, they reached Mahendra Mountain, the mighty armed Rama ascended on its peak adorned with flowers (VI-4-292). Thus having duly crossed in the first place, the Sahay Mountain as well as the Great Malaya Mountain, they reached Mahendra mountain beyond which was the ocean making a terrible noise (VI-4-94). All these prove that they traveled only through woody and hilly areas. That is why during his march with army Kishkinda to Lanka no description about kingdoms is mentioned, but only the repeated description about the forests in which Sahaya, Malaya and Mahendra are there with their surrounding areas, mentioning the names of species of many trees, flowers, animals and aquatic dwellers.

17. The propounders of the theory restricting the sojourn of Rama before Godavari reject these verses as interpolations¹⁶. Even Kibe¹⁷ says, "But in this lengthy chapter 4 of Yuddhakanda in which Rama's journey to the sea and his ascending of Mahendra is described, there appear to have crept in some interpolations, such as in 73,74,97 and 98, the meaning of which is also obscure." But from Aranyakanda cantos 48 to 54, Kishkindakanda 48 to 63 and Yuddhakanda 4, where the routes of Ravana (Panchavati through Kishkinda to Lanka), Hanuman and Rama (Kishkinda to Lanka), one can notice the consistency in the description. The respective routes also indicate the psychology of them. Ravana "rushed" towards Lanka "with his face towards" it. Hanuman along with Vanaras wandered here and there losing the route, reached Lanka finally. Rama reached Lanka with his army as described. As far as the meaning of the verses, it cannot be accepted that they are obscure, as they clearly convey the meaning.

18. **Kishkinda of other theories:** Location of "Kishkinda" based on other scholars are mentioned as follows:

1. Kibe records in his article¹⁸, "Even today about this place (92 miles from Chitrakuta i.e, on the northern slope of the Vindhya) amidst the surroundings described in the Ramayana, is a village named Kandho. A fair is held in memory of Dasaratha's misadventure where by came to him the cure about his death in the case of Sravana, is held here". This Kandho according to Sardar Kibe is the site for Kishkinda.

¹⁶ The mixing up of manuscripts had been one of the practical problems faced by the compilers of manuscripts and as well as critical editions of Ramayana, as could be noted in their proceedings.

¹⁷ M. V. Kibe, **Further Light on Ravana's Lanka**, JBORI, Vol. XVII, 1935-36, p.371.

¹⁸ M V. Kibe, **Lanka Discovered**, p.13

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

2. D. R. Bhandarkar¹⁹ mentions that in the Jodhpur state in Rajasthan, there are such places as “Mandor”, a village on whose outskirts lies, “Ravan-ki-chauri”, the marriage hall of Ravana. Mandor is a place, they say, where the father of Mandodari was staying. There is another place “Ravana” in the Baldia district, where Ravana was born. Near Ravana is a cavern “chokdi” and here Ravana is said to have performed penance and pleased Shiva and got the Kingdom of fourteen chikdis. Again fifteen miles away from there, is a place called “Kekind”, which is believed to be “Kishkinda”.
3. That Kekind was the site for ancient Kishkinda is supported by popular belief and reflected in two inscriptions²⁰ – one in the Shiva temple of Samvat 1176 and the other in a Jain temple of Samvat 1230 both giving Kishkinda as the old name of the place.
4. Bhandarkar²¹ also mentions one more Kishkinda in another place at “Anegundi” on the left bank of Tungabadra which is “popularly identified with the Kishkinda of the Ramayana”. The Ron inscription of Turagavedanga of A.D.874 and the Sudi inscription of Dadiga of 13th century support this identification²².
5. D. P. Mishra²³ locates Kishkinda near modern Malkangiri or Matanga-giri east of Bastar (janasthana) refuting the above locations.

19. All these theories are based on purely popular beliefs or the respective localities and tradition, though in two cases supported by epigraphical evidences. Similar beliefs prevail in all states of southern India. The above diversified views are based on the following premises –

- ⇔ Rama’s sojourn was restricted to Godavari river
- ⇔ Vindhya Parvat mentioned earlier and Vindya Partvat mentioned later in Ramayana are one and the same.
- ⇔ Panya’s kingdom was extended up to modern Orissa.
- ⇔ The river Tamaraparni flows from Orissa and not in Tamilnadu (p.59, Search for Lanka).
- ⇔ Coming to a final conclusion after correlating the customs, behaviour and tradition of a particular tribe of the respective locality.

20. F. E. Pargiter describes in detail about the sojourn of Rama from Ayodhya to Lanka identifying the names of towns, rivers and mountains with modern existing ones. He identifies Kishkinda with some place at or near Bellary. A map of Mishra shows²⁴ the location of Kishkinda at or near Bellary. Pargiter says, “This locality (Bellary) is an ancient inhabitant site. It was thickly studded with

¹⁹ R. D. Bhandarkar, *Jha Commemorative Volume Essays on Oriental Subjects*, Oriental Book Agency, Poona, 1937, p.52.

²⁰ PRAS, wc 1910-11, pp.35-38

²¹ Imperial Gazetteer, Vol.V, p.373

²² Jha Commemorative Volume, opt.cit, p.55ff,

²³ D. P. Mishra, *The Search for Lanka*, pp.47-49

²⁴ Dr. S. N. Vyas, *India in the Ramayana Age*, see map facing p.no.325.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

Neolithic settlements and Paleolithic remains also have been found²⁵. R. Bruce Foote²⁶ mentioned about this discovery. After independence, our archaeologists have also found abundant evidences to prove the Neolithic culture in this area. The evidence include pottery lid with animal designs in dots, gold ornaments, adult burial in multiple pots etc., in Tekkalakota and Sangannakallu in Bellary district²⁷. Pre-historic monuments found in Bellary include a large number of stone circles and dolmens and half of which are holed variety. They are riddled with old workings of gold, copper and iron. Mention may be made of Celt (chisel edged prehistoric tool) factory in Bellary where not only weapons of offence and defense were made in a polished state, but others like beads, buttons, discus, marbles, pendants and vessels, besides a large number of human and animal figures, show that their civilization was far higher than that of paleolithic Age. These stone implements are consistent with the culture of “Vanaras”. Gorresio, Wheeler, M. N. Ray and others regard Vanaras as the non-Aryan hill tribes of Southern India. Vanaras also used ornaments of gold (IV-32-23; IV-11-61; IV-2-6). Usage of stones and stone implements are mentioned (IV-58-9; IV-11-42 to 46). Kishkinda, the Vanara capital was a Mahapuri, situated in a mountainous region (giri-sanketa, IV-31-16) amidst charming surroundings. The approaches to the city lay through a dense forest, abounding in hills and dales, rills and caverns, infested with wild beasts IV-13-5 to 12).

21. In view of the above, the identification of Kishkinda at a place at or near Bellary is not only consistent with the movements of Rama and the description of Kishkinda as given in Ramayana, but also supported by proven neolithic cultural evidences. Hence, the identification of Kishkinda with Kandho, Kekind in Rajasthan, Anegundi and Malkangiri in Madhya Pradesh appears to be inconsistent with the description of Ramayana and therefore not at all sustainable.

22. **Tamaraparni river:** In Kishkindakandam, canto 41, verses 14-19, Valmiki clearly mentions that Kaveri is in front of Malaya mountain and to reach the wonderful golden gate of the city of the Pandyas, one has to cross the Tamaraparni river infested with alligators. This exactly fits with the geography of Tamilnadu, where we can find Kaveri first and then Tamaraparni among the list of rivers in order²⁸, “Passing over less important rivers, we may note that Tamaraparni, rising amongst the wooden hills, forms a life-line for agriculture in the Tinnevely district. As its mouth in the Gulf of Mannar are the famous pearl fisheries often described by travelers from other countries”.

23. The name Tamaraparni was applied to Sri Lanka in the past, seems to have had connection with the river Tamaraparni. Lankadvipa is said to have acquired this additional name “Tambapanni” from the circumstance that the hands of

²⁵ F. E. Pargiter, *The Geography of Rama's Exile*, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1894, p.257.

²⁶ Robert Foote, JRAS of Bengal, 1887 in Vol.lvi

²⁷ M. S. Nagaraja Rao, *Progress of Archaeology in Karnataka, 1956-1972*, p.8.

²⁸ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, p.44.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

Vijaya's wearied men were rendered by the copper-coloured sand when they threw themselves down at their landing place touched the earth. However, Tambapanni is the name for Sri Lanka in the Asokan inscriptions of the 3rd cent. BCE. In the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, Greek writers like Onesicritus, Megasthenes and Erastosthenes have called Sri Lanka the island of Taprabone. The Periplus shows that the name Taprobane had been replaced by Palaesimunda²⁹.

24. All these references go to prove that Tamaraparni was so associated with ancient Pandyas, Tamilnadu and Ceylon and by no stretch of imagination, it can be made to flow in Orissa, as suggested and Pandyas' kingdom can be extended up to Kalinga (Modern Orissa) ignoring completely the Andhras, Pundras, Cholas and Cheras, depriving their kingdoms, a Valmiki mentioned about these kingdoms and rivers Kaveri and Tamaraparni, only after the mention of the rivers Narmada, Godavari, Krishnaveni, Varda, and the territories of Mekala, Utkala etc (IV-41-8).

25. **Pandya Kingdom:** There are several references about Pandya King and his Kingdom. As already mentioned, when Sugriva was organizing the search for Sita in all directions, he sent a band of followers to the south. In giving an account of this, Valmiki gives a list of kingdoms that lay to the south of Andhras, the Pundras, the Cholas and the Pandyas with the Keralas (IV-41-12). In giving directions to the army which he sent to the west, he mentions Muracipattinam, which is Musiri, the great ancient sea-port of the Malabar coast (IV-42-13). When Rama starts towards south, the districts of Andhras, Pundras, Cholas and Pandyas are not at all mentioned. But according to one tradition, Rama reached Ceylon (present Sri Lanka) via Rameswaram³⁰ (). But from this, we can understand that he did not go through that direction at all, as he went direct only in southwesterly direction (II-64-23; iii-69-1) avoiding populated areas (VI-4-39), which has already been mentioned. If he would have gone through Pandya Kingdom, then there would have been a mention about it. Pargiter also wonders³¹, "*Again except in the geographical cantos, which I will notice presently, no mention is made of Pandyas, though their Kingdom was one of the oldest in the South*". Tamil literature clearly says about the three Sangams (Academies) organized by the Pandya Kings first in Ten Madurai, second in Kapatapuram and the third in modern Madurai. Ten Madurai was submerged and the Kapatapuram may be the "Pandyanam Kavatum" as mentioned in the Ramayana (IV-41-19). In verse in Raguvamsa describes about the Swayamvara of the princess Indumathi and at that time, Sunanda tells about the King of Pandya country. Ravana was afraid of Pandya King as he obtained a celestial missile from Shiva, so he entered into a pact of friendship with him. Kalidasa mentions Kaveri and Tamaraparni rivers of Pandya country.

²⁹ Parker, Ancient Ceylon, 1909, p.235.

³⁰ P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *History of Tamils from the Earliest Times to 600 AD*, pp.53-55.

³¹ F. E. Pargiter, p.233.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

26. The description in Aranyakanda cantos 48 to 54, Kishkinda kanda 48 to 63 and Yuddhakanda 4 about the route of Ravana from Panchavati through Kishkinda to Lanka, of Hanuman and Rama from Kishkinda to Lanka and the description of ocean and aquatic species (III-54-8, 9 & 12; IV-63 & 64; VI-4-109 to 113), and its terrible noise (VI-4-94), clearly take the sojourn of Rama beyond present India. So having come to the Southern Sea, i.e., Indian Ocean, let us see which island exactly fits with Lanka.

27. Though there are many islands in Indian Ocean, geological, zoological, botanical, anthropological, linguistic and astronomical evidences help us to locate Ramayana Lanka. Before that, it is worth while to consider certain details of Ceylon (the present day Sri Lanka). As for as the location of Lanka is concerned, it is unanimously accepted by all scholars that Ceylon and Lanka are entirely different from each other. But, references are made in the Mahavamsa to what appears to have been subsidence of land in historic times, a couple of centuries before the beginning of the Current Era. It is mentioned that King Tissa was punished for some impiety by an encroachment of the sea. To propitiate the angry spirits, he set his daughter afloat in a canoe. This princess was rescued and became mother of King Dutthagamani. The settlement of the aborigines at Lankapuri is supported to have submerged, and it is possible that the earliest Sinhalese capitals, which have hitherto been sought for in vain, suffered a like fate. The aborigines appear to have evolved some sort of organization, with a primitive settlement at the new vanished site of Lankapura.

28. Enruquez noted³², “According to the most ancient traditions, the site of Lankapura, together with other lands to the west of Ceylon was submerged in the ocean at an early date”. In Sutta-Nipata, we find the following details: “When Brahma created the waters he formed Rakshas to guard them. Vishwakarma, the general architect and builder of the Gods, created a city termed Lankapura for them in Ceylon, on the top of the mountain Trikuta “Three Peaks” on the shore of the southern ocean. Kuvera, the God of wealth, with his attendants the Yakshas, who were demons of another type, but of a higher order, then took up his residence in Ceylon, at Lankapura. Later Ravana drew away Kuvera and occupied Lankapura.” So Ceylon chronicles mention about one “Lankapura” part of Ceylon was submerged long ago. This is consistent with the references of Tamil literature which specifically mentions about the submerged land of Pandya with the river Pakhruli (Silappathikaram 11: 20-21, Kalittogai-104, Purananuru-9, Kuruntogai-52).

29. **Geological evidences:** According to the proven and established principles of Continental drift, seafloor spreading and plate tectonics, the landmass between India and Africa was broken into small islands. Seafloor spreading along one arm separated South America and Africa from Antarctica; the second arm accounted for the separation of Malagasy (still juxtaposed along the west coast of India) from Africa; and the third arm separated Antartika and India. Malagasy was

³² C. M. Enruquez, *Ceylon Past and present*, p.18.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

separated from the west coast of India. That is why we can note that the Precambrian terrain of Malagasy which was juxtaposed against the west coast of India, has a westerly slope³³, “.....with regard to the geographical evidence, a glance at the map will show that from the neighborhood of the west coast of India to that of the Seychelles, Madagascar and the Mauritius, extends a line of coral atolls and banks, including Adams bank, Lacadives, Maldives, the Chagos group of an the Saye de Malha, all indicating the existence of a submerged mountain range or ranges”. The presence of a series of rocks of a similar nature in these areas also proves that once, they formed part of one land mass. In Ramayana itself, there are references about the start of submergence of Mount Mahendra (V-1-16 & 45) and appearance of Mt. Mainaga from the ocean (V-1-101 & 102). This is a clear indication about the geological process of submergence and emergence of islands during Ramayan period.

30. Zoological and Botanical Evidences: The existence of land mass in between continents had been always one of the hypotheses put forward³⁴, “*The affinities between the fossils of both animals and plants of the Baufort group of Africa and those of the Indian Pachests and Kathmis are such as to suggest the 5former existence of a land connection between the two areas.....The plant beds of the Uitenhage group have furnished eleven forms of plants, two of which Mr. Tate has identified with Indian Rajmahal plants.....Now the plant bearing series of India and the Karoo and part of the Uitenhage formation of Africa are in all probability of fresh water origin both indicating the existence of a large land area around, from the waste of which these deposits are derived*”. Ceylon was the part of South India and it has the Malabar influence on flora and fauna, thus, Enriquez noted³⁵, “*But while the flora and fauna of Ceylon are closely related to those of Southern India , they have at the same time a more remote relationship to those of Africa, Madagascar and the Malay Archipelago.*” As the Lemur evoked a lot, he added³⁶, “*The only Ceylon Lemur (Loris gracilis) and the single Sinhalese Chameleon (Chameleo calcaratus) and amongst birds the Drongo (Dicruridea) point to connection with Madagascar, so also some of the snails. Those of Ceylon are highly peculiar and largest and commonest of them (Avavus), which are often found on tree trunks and fences, are not only closely related to the Madagascar genus Helicophanta, but also to the Australian genus Panda. At least two Ceylon butterflies – Byblia violae and Aphnaeusa lohita lazularia have near relations in South Africa*”.

31. Anthropological Evidence: There are many racial affinities among the habitants of South India, Ceylon, Maldives, Seychelles, Madagascar and Africa. The Veddas of Ceylon are the same stock as the Kadirs, Paniyans, Kurumbas of Southern India. The natives of Maldives have similar complexion, featurres,

³³ W. Scott-Elliot, *The Lost Lemuria*, p.72.

³⁴ H. F. Blandford, On the Age and Correlations of the Plant-bearing series of India other former Existence of an Indo-Oceanic Continent, Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society, Vol.xxxi, 1875, pp.534-540.

³⁵ C. M. Enriquez, *Ceylon Past and Present*, p.6.

³⁶ Ibid, p.8 and 9.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

language and manners as that of the natives of Ceylon. Though some of the South Indian tribes, all the Wolofs of the Senegal and Gambia coast districts, they have no resemblance to the true negroes, they belong to Dravidian race³⁷, “It is indeed beyond question that the Dravidian share the same black blood as their brothers in Africa and those of the Diaspora. The ancient Greeks did not err when they called all black people Aitniopes” . Though Madagascar is near to Africa, the natives are not of Negroid type. Ramayan description of Rakshasa is similar to the features of the tribes of these islands. The conventional picture of a Rakshasa, prevalent in our day and given in the epic and Puranic records, represents him as a hideous creature with black colour skin, disheveled hair, eyes like burning red balls, sharp claws, twisted teeth, an awfully forward chin and huge arms (III-69-26 to 32; I-25-13; III-52-23). Ravana was also a black man, having the characteristic features of Africans or the tribes mentioned above.

32. **Astronomical Evidence:** In the ancient Indian Astronomical work “Surya Siddhanta”, in Goladhyaya, it is mentioned that four great cities were constructed by the divine people on the equator at equal distances from each other and on all four directions of the “Meru”. They were Yavakoti on the east, Lanka in the south, Romaka in the west and Siddhapuri in the north. The Indian astronomer Aryabhata also mentions about Lanka in section IV – Gola or Spherics of Aryabhatiyam: “The frame of the constellation with all the planets move straight westward at Lanka being thrown that way by the wind called “Prabha” for producing their daily raisings and settings (10), what is sunrise at Lanka is sunset at Siddhapura, is noon at Yavakoti and is midnight at Romaka (13), Lanka is midway between the circumference of the earth (from the pole) and Ujjain is at one-fourth of that quadrant straight towards the north (14). The latitude of Avanti is thus $22\frac{1}{2}$ degrees north. But according to Varahamihira and Brahmagupta, it is 24° . Bhaskaracharya however is in agreement with Aryabhata. He also says the same thing in his work, in the 17th verse of Goladhyaya. Pulisa, Pura Vasishtha and Lata also agree with this. Alberuni remarks, “The midst of the inhabitantble world of its longitudinal extension from east to west to meet on the equator, is by the astronomers (of the Muslims) called the “capola” of the earth. But, Hindus never call this point by a term that in our language must be interpreted by capola³⁸; they only say that Lanka is between the two ends of the inhabitable world and without latitude”. Indian astromers call this equatorial region by the name “Niraksha”, i.e, 0° Latitiude Desha. The system adopted by the ancients is beginning with the Equator and Lanka as the starting point or Zero and passing directly up to Siddhapuri, over and over to the north. Even in Valmiki Ramayana, it is interesting to note eastern mountain is there in the farthest point (IV-40-66), Pitru-loka in the South (IV-41-44, western mountain on the west (IV-42-50) and the Somagiri in the north which is the abode of all Gods (IV-43-53) and sugriva instructs not to go beyond these limits, because all the existing countries are covered within these boundaries and there is ocean beyond it. Even now, if one looks at the opposite point on the other side of the globe on

³⁷ Leopold Sedar Senghor, *Negritude and Dravidian Culture*, p.4.

³⁸, Alberuni's India, p.303

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

equator, there is only the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, Valmiki was very specific and accurate in describing the places, rivers and mountains. The astounding astronomical knowledge of Valmiki is also exhibited in the following verses VI-124-1, II-26-9, VI-24-1, V-19-13, VI-24-1, VI-92-62, I-18-8 to 10, I-18-15, III-46-6, IV-12-17, VI-4-52 etc.

33. Linguistic Evidence: The languages spoken in the Indian Ocean islands are all Dravidian origin. The people of Maldives speak Divehi (Maldivian), which is similar to Sinhalese. So also, the languages spoken by the natives of all islands. Frobenius, Baumann, Westermann and many others have noticed the Dravidian influence in Wolof, Mande, Kwa, Bantu, Luganda or Ganda, Swahili, Nyanja, Zulu and other African languages.

34. Discussion and analysis: With the above discussion of Valmiki Ramayana verses that have bearing on the issues and the conclusion of many experts in the subject matter, the following points are discussed:

1. About M.V. Kibe's incomplete location of places, D. R. Bhandarkar pointed out that³⁹, "*He identifies Lanka with Amarakantak from which the Narmada springs. If Lanka was thus situated in the southern part of the Vindhya, the Godhavari, Panchavati or Janasthana, Kishkindha, Pampa and so forth must have been either in the northern part of or to the north of the Vindhya. But, Sardar Kibe was unable to locate these places and explained away these names, not as proper names, but as common nouns*".
2. Following F. E. Pargiter, Bhandarkar noted⁴⁰, "*Ravana's Lanka thus an island which could be seen from the junction near the sea, where the Malaya, Dardura and Vindhya met*".
3. Though Paramshiv Iyer knew "Lingga islands" was situated on the equatorial line⁴¹, he preferred to locate on Indrani hill top. He even mentioned that the Dutch Riow Lingga Archipelago was located on the equator⁴². C. E. Godakumbura distinguished Ila, Ilangai, Lanka, Sri Lanka, Simhala etc., from each other⁴³.
4. Researchers like M. M. Kelkar could not go beyond the "Amarakantak" theory and accepted it⁴⁴.
5. H. D. Sankalia⁴⁵, accepting the historicity of Ramayana, agreed with the views of Kibe, Parashiv Iyer and Hiralal to locate Lanka in the Central India.
6. V. Raghavan opined, "*There is one Ramayana tradition on which epigraphic records throw very welcome light. This is about the location of Ravana's*

³⁹ Jha Commemorative Volume, pp.50-51.

⁴⁰ Jha Commemorative Volume, p.56.

⁴¹ T. Paramshiv Iyer, op.cit, pp.12-16.

⁴² The Lingga Regency (Indonesian: Kabupaten Lingga) are a group of islands in Indonesia, located south of Singapore, along both sides of the equator, off the eastern coast of Riau Province on Sumatra island.

⁴³ C. E. Godakumbura, *Ramayana in Sri Lanka and Lanka of Ramayana*, in V. Raghavan (Ed.), pp.430-454.

⁴⁴ Monohar Mohadeo Kelkar, *Location of Lanka*, published by the author, Pune, 1947. He also accepted its location at Amarakantak.

⁴⁵ H. D. Sankalia, *Ramayana, Myth or Reality*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973, pp.17-19.

A paper presented at the session of Indian History Congress held at Dharwad from November 2nd to 4th, 1988.

Lanka. Although the Ramayana quite clearly places Ravana's abode in an island in the ocean to the south of Mt. Mahendra (i.e., Eastern Ghats including the Mahendragiri in the Tirunelveli District, Tamilnadu) and Mt. Malaya (the Southern spurs of the Western Ghats including the Travancore hills) apparently in what is now called Sri Lanka (former Ceylon) far beyond the Godavari and the Kaveri, a number of modern writers exercise their imagination too liberally and locate Ravana's Lanka elsewhere within India, often on the Amarkantak hills in the Bilaspur District, Madhya Pradesh."

7. V. Raghavan pointed out that experts of each field conclude their decision based on their expertise alone, without going into other fields,⁴⁶ *"They do not appear to be conscious of the fact that the Mahendra and Malaya ranges are mentioned in the Harsacarita (seventh century A.D.) as touching each other obviously at the southernmost point of India,¹⁸ and that the Ramayana was understood by all ancient Indian works such as Kalidasa's Raghuvamsha (fourth-fifth century), Pravarasena's Setubandha or Ravanavadha (fifth century), the Bhattikavya or Ravanavadha (seventh century), Bhavabhuti's Mahaviracarita and Uttararamacarita (eighth century) etc., to locate Lanka in the present Sri Lanka (Ceylon). The said modern authors are also not quite conscious about the clear evidence of inscriptions of this point and would invite us to accept twentieth century speculations in respect of a quite clear early Indian tradition"*.

Ramayana's Lanka is located in Maldive islands: As these Geological, Zoological, Botanical, anthropological, astronomical and linguistic evidences are consistent with the description of Valmiki Ramayana, Ravana's Lanka is to be located on equator and on the submerged land mass under the Indian Ocean. This is also consistent with the tradition. The popularity of Ramayana can be understood from its established influence for about two thousand years throughout the South East Asian countries. And the important point to be noted is, when we move from north to south, Ravana is given more importance in those countries than Rama, in their folk-tales, songs and dramas. As the Rama's fame is felt in and around Ayodhya, naturally and historically, Ramayana's influence is felt outside the present India. This clearly shows that the so called "two thousand years tradition" as christened by M. V. Kibe, cannot be ignored, as it is not only given in the Ramayana, but also proved by the other branches of science, as shown above. Only historians have to go into the details of the relevancy of it to history to solve various ancient historical riddles. As for as, here, based on the evidences discussed, the Ravana's or Ramayana Lanka is located on the Male atoll or one of the submerged islands at equator, where, the Indian Longitude cuts it.

⁴⁶ V. Raghavan, opt.cit, 327-328.